

PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

Nonmelanoma Skin Cancer: Am I at Risk?

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Skin cancer is the most common malignancy that is diagnosed in the U.S. There are two types of skin cancer: melanoma or nonmelanoma.

Melanoma skin cancers are more aggressive and spread very fast. Nonmelanoma skin cancers (NMSC) occur at a slower rate and are usually only in the upper layers of the skin and do not spread to other areas. Nonmelanoma skin cancers are associated with low death rates and slow growth. The main mode of treatment for NMSC is the surgical removal of the malignant tissue. Some other alternative treatments include radiotherapy, chemotherapy, cryotherapy, certain creams and photodynamic therapy. The NMSC cure rate is around 90% and the risk of spreading to other parts is very low when caught early.

COMMON SIGNS OF NMSC

- Lumps and patches that are persistent for several weeks.
- Lumps will usually have a red and firm appearance and patches will look flat and feel scaly.
- Changes in the skin such as a new growth.
- Nonhealing sores that look like a freckle or a mole.

RISK FACTORS

- Environmental exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light. Family history of skin cancer, pale skin, freckles or moles, chronic wounds or a history of a lot of sunburns.
- Exposure to cancer causing chemicals.
- Human Papilloma Virus.
- Men are at a higher risk than women.
- Certain medications increase the sensitivity of the skin and put you more at risk of getting skin damage. Immunosuppressants can also put you at risk.



SOURCE(S): American Academy of Dermatology; Centers for Disease Control; Up-to-Date

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